

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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**FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT
COOK INLET PARALLEL PACIFIC COD SEASON CLOSURES TO POT GEAR
STATE WATERS PACIFIC COD SEASON OPENS TO POT GEAR
EO # 2-GF-H-02-12**

The parallel Pacific cod season in the Cook Inlet Management Area will **close to pot gear effective 12:00 noon February 10, 2012**. This coincides with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) closure of the Pacific cod pot gear sector in the federal Central Gulf of Alaska area. The parallel season for jig and longline gear in state waters will remain open until closed by emergency order.

The Cook Inlet **state-waters Pacific cod season** for pot gear will **open at 12:00 noon, February 11, 2012** with a guideline harvest level (GHL) of 4.7 million pounds allocated 85% or 4.0 million pounds to pot gear and 15% or 0.7 million pounds to jig gear. The state-waters season Pacific cod harvest prior to September 1, by vessels fishing pot gear and greater than 58 feet in length, is limited to 25% of the total GHL or approximately 1.2 million pounds. In addition to the directed fishery, Pacific cod may be retained in state waters as bycatch to other directed groundfish and halibut fisheries at a maximum of 20%.

Area registration in the state waters Pacific cod fishery is exclusive, no more than 60 groundfish pots may be operated from a vessel, and each pot must display a buoy identification tag. Buoy tags and vessel registrations may be obtained from department offices in Homer, Cordova, and Kodiak or from the Department of Public Safety in Seward. A vessel may not participate in a state-waters Pacific cod season and any other Pacific cod season at the same time.

There is a 24-hour delivery time requirement following closure of a groundfish fishery. Groundfish pot storage provisions allow groundfish pot gear to be stored in state waters for up to five days following the parallel fishery closure provided all bait and bait containers are removed and all doors are secured open at the time of closure. After the five day period has elapsed, no groundfish pot storage is permitted in state waters.

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Steller Sea Lion Rookery closures: The department has closed fishing in waters adjacent to two sea lion rookeries in the Cook Inlet Area. Sugarloaf Island (in the Barren Islands) and Outer (Pye) Island are closed to directed Pacific cod fishing with pot gear within 10 nautical miles of the specified locations and closed to vessel transit within three nautical miles. Contact ADF&G in Homer, NMFS in Kodiak (ph: 481-1780), or consult the NMFS website at: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/rr/tables/tab15.pdf> for exact locations of these closure areas.

Pot fishing closure areas: Some areas are closed by regulation 5AAC 28.350 to fishing with groundfish pot gear. Check the regulation book or contact the department prior to fishing.

For additional information on the Cook Inlet Area fishery, contact ADF&G in Homer, at 907-235-8191.

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